

## BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the )  
Disciplinary Action of the )  
Educator Certificate of )  
Elizabeth A. O'Nan )  
Certificate 214457 )

### CONSENT ORDER OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND

#### SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on March 12, 2019. On February 1, 2019, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Elizabeth A. O'Nan a notice letter by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail, regarding possible action against his educator certificate. After receiving the notice letter, Ms. O'Nan's legal counsel contacted the SCDE and advised that she desired to waive her right to a hearing and pursue an alternative resolution in this matter. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept this Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. O'Nan holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. She has over twenty-one years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board.

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Ms. O'Nan was employed by the Beaufort County School District (District) as principal of Hilton Head Island High School (School). In August of 2016, the SCDE learned of allegations Ms. O'Nan may have engaged in inappropriate conduct on School grounds after hours. Ms. O'Nan denied the allegations and the SCDE closed the investigation as there was no supporting evidence submitted to the SCDE at that time.

On January 8, 2019, the SCDE learned that evidence exists of published information that may support the allegations. In answer to a second subpoena, the District also provided evidence that was not made available to the SCDE during the 2016 investigation. In the resolution of this case, Ms. O'Nan hereby acknowledges that she placed herself in a sensitive position by meeting an individual for reasons unrelated to

School business on School grounds after hours. She acknowledges the serious nature of her lapse of judgement but contends there was no detrimental impact on the School.

Ms. O'Nan has agreed to waive her right to a hearing and resolve this disciplinary matter by entering into this Consent Order of Public Reprimand, subject to the following terms: (1) a Public Reprimand shall be issued by the State Board, (2) the Public Reprimand shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order, and (3) the Consent Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE's website and shall be maintained as a public record in the OGC. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand with the terms set forth above.

#### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2017); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2017). The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the District would not support a conclusion that just cause exists to suspend or revoke the educator certificate of Elizabeth A. O'Nan; however, the evidence that would be presented would support a conclusion that Ms. O'Nan engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of inappropriate conduct. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Ms. O'Nan by the State Board.

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Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand to Elizabeth A. O'Nan, certificate 214457. The Public Reprimand shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order with the grounds listed as "unprofessional conduct." This Consent Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE's web site and shall be maintained as a public record in the SCDE's Office of General Counsel.

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**AND IT IS SO ORDERED.**

South Carolina State Board of Education

  
Del-Gratia Jones, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina  
March 12, 2019

I, Elizabeth A. O'Nan, S.C. Educator Certificate 214457, understand there has been an investigation concerning alleged violations of the laws and regulations governing the practice of educator certificate holders and that I have waived my right to a hearing in this matter. I understand that the terms set forth in this Consent Order of Public Reprimand are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I have read the Consent Order of Public Reprimand, consisting of three pages, and I freely and voluntarily agree to the terms set forth therein. I understand that this Order will be presented to the South Carolina State Board of Education for approval on Tuesday, March 12, 2019. I understand this Consent Order will not become effective until approved by the State Board and, if not approved, it shall not constitute an admission against interest in this proceeding or prejudice the right of the State Board to adjudicate this matter. If approved by the State Board, I give the SCDE permission to use my electronic signature in the style of "/S/ name" for required website publication.



Elizabeth A. O'Nan

3-5-19

Date